



# 2020

## Downtown Investment Grant Application Manual



Applications accepted on CAMS starting:  
**January 2, 2019**

Last day applications accepted on CAMS:  
**March 22, 2019**

Grant awards announced: **Summer 2019**

Grant funded projects must be complete  
and grants closed: **May 31, 2020**



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING  
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
*Partners for Better Communities*

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# Virginia Main Street (VMS) Downtown Investment Grant

The [Virginia Main Street Program](#) (VMS) is a community economic development program that follows the Main Street Approach of the National Main Street Center. Each year local Main Street organizations work to attract to their historic commercial districts the substantial private and public investment necessary to: (1) breathe new life into blighted and vacant buildings, (2) establish and expand independent businesses that make downtowns fun and unique consumer destinations, and (3) create mixed-use downtowns where people once again live above bustling commercial establishments and property owners maximize the productive use of every floor of downtown buildings.

The cumulative success of the Main Street Approach and local programs has earned Main Street the reputation as a powerful economic revitalization tool. In 2017 alone, VMS designated communities reported:

- \$121 million in privately funded improvements to downtown historic buildings;
- \$44 million in public improvements to help encourage private investment in downtowns;
- more than 325 unique businesses created, expanded or retained in historic commercial districts, and;
- more than 1,300 jobs created or retained for local community members seeking employment.

Downtown Investment Grants (DIGs) allow Main Street organizations to take on unique, one-time projects that measurably, creatively, and sustainably advance the organization's goals and strategies. DIGs involve multiple downtown partners and require active leadership and participation by the organization's board, committees, and volunteers. DIGs may not be used for marketing, printing, continuing operations, program administration, payroll, debts, or any other operational expenses.

## **Instructions for Application Submission**

Please note that applications must be submitted electronically through the Agency's Centralized Application and Management System (CAMS). To access CAMS, visit the website at [www.dhcd.virginia.gov](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov) and click on the CAMS icon in the upper-right hand corner.

<b>Google Chrome is the recommended browser for CAMS. Remember to SAVE often.</b>
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## **Submission Requirements**

All grant applications and supporting documentation must be submitted on CAMS by 11:59 PM on March 22, 2019. Applications not submitted accordingly may be disqualified. Please note: Technical support with CAMS is available weekdays between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm.

Applicants must submit completed responses to all appropriate questions and include all required attachments.

### **Grant Eligibility**

Grants are available only to designated VMS communities and must be administered through the designated local VMS organization. Special exceptions may be made for high functioning commercial district affiliates. Applicants must be current on all VMS reports. Priority is given to Nationally Accredited communities.

All applicants must comply with DHCD's financial auditing requirements by uploading to CAMS a copy of the organization's W-9 and a copy of the organization's most recent audit, reviewed financial statement or 990, as applicable, by the grant's application deadline (March 22, 2019).

### **VMS Funding Priorities**

DHCD's FY2020 Virginia Main Street Downtown Investment Grants (DIGs) are available in two categories:

**Design:** Projects that will visually enhance the Main Street District. These may include wayfinding systems, street furnishings, façade improvements, or other unique aesthetic enhancement projects.

**Economic Vitality:** Projects that will contribute to the revitalization activity in or near the Main Street District. These projects may include:

- an innovative economic vitality strategy with implementation plan;
- new independent businesses that create new full time jobs in the Main Street District; or
- other project that results in positive job creation and fulfills an Economic Vitality goal from the organization's current work plan.

Communities are encouraged to utilize Consultant Services (see pp. 26-28 in 2017 VMS Program Guidelines) to develop design projects, as well as the planning and organizational support components for economic vitality projects. DIG funds can be used to: fund complete projects; provide seed funding for new projects; develop website or mobile applications; or provide gap financing that allows a project to become fully funded. Other categories contributing to economic vitality will be considered.

The DIG funds will not be awarded for continuing operations, program administration, payroll, debts, or any other operational expenses. Funds will not be awarded for predictable organizational expenses for which the board could have reasonably planned (ex. general marketing materials, website updates, financial management expenses, etc.). Funds may not be simply "passed through" the Main Street organization to third parties.

A strong application will clearly explain how the proposed project will encourage private investment that results in measurable economic improvement in the Main Street district. The project will support the community's vision for encouraging the private investment necessary for the economic revitalization of the Main Street district, will clearly align with the mission of the Main Street organization, and will address one or more of the Main Street board's Transformation Strategies or strategic planning goals for the Main Street district. The implementation of the proposed project will empower board and committee volunteers as leaders and will help develop and capitalize on the expertise and financial support of the organization's stakeholders and community partners.

**Award Amounts:** Up to \$25,000 each

### **Grant Payment**

Grant funds will be paid upon completion of agreed upon project milestones which will be negotiated and included in a memorandum of understanding that will be signed by both DHCD/VMS and the grantee prior to the start of the project. Projects must be completed no later than May 31, 2020.

### **Leverage Requirement**

**Design** projects require a 1:1 match. In-kind services provided by local government, consultants, and other Main Street stakeholders and partners may be included. Time contributed solely to the implementation of the project by volunteers from the Main Street organization or the organization's partners may be included. Volunteer hours are calculated at \$24.69 per hour ([https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer\\_time](https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time)).

**Economic Vitality** projects do not require a funding match, though projects with matching funds will receive priority.

### **Scoring**

Grant proposals will be scored on a 0-100 point scale. DIG funds are limited and only those proposals exceeding the minimum 70-point threshold will be considered for funding. The project scoring methodology is as follows:

<b>Scoring Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>
Relation to organizational mission and vision	10
Relation to Transformation Strategies/goals	30
Project's Impact on downtown improvement	30
Organizational capacity/readiness	20
Realistic project work plan and budget	10
Total	100

### **Application Instructions**

The application on CAMS will require the organization to:

1. Provide a description of the proposed project and its intended outcomes. Explain how this is an effective strategy that will attract private investment to the Main Street district and will result in a more vibrant and viable downtown.
2. Explain how this project aligns with the organization's vision, mission, Transformation Strategies and/or priority goals for the Main Street district.
3. Provide a list of the current board members and committee chairs.
4. Upload multiple supporting documents as attachments.

### **Project Description**

Enter the following information into the relevant text box on CAMS. Please limit responses to no more than 500 words per text box (about one written page).

1. Provide a detailed description of the proposed project and its intended outcomes. Explain how this is an effective strategy that will attract private investment to the Main Street district and will result in new and stronger businesses, building renovation or construction, and/or increase retail and residential opportunities.
2. Fully describe both the direct and indirect outcomes that are expected from this project.
3. Describe how the proposed project furthers the community's vision for the Main Street district, aligns with the mission of the Main Street organization and addresses one or more of the board's Transformation Strategies/goals for the Main Street district.

### **Required Supporting Documents - Organization Leadership**

Enter the following information into the relevant text box on CAMS. Please limit responses to no more than 500 words per text box (about one written page).

1. Community's **Vision statement** for the Main Street district.
2. **Mission statement** for the Main Street organization.
3. Strategic Plan that lists the board's **Transformation Strategies/goals** for the Main Street district.
4. A list of current board members and committee chairs.

## **Required Supporting Documents - Project Implementation Capacity**

Upload the following documents as attachments in CAMS.

1. **Project Work Plan** – Provide an effective and appropriate work plan for the project that includes tasks, responsible individuals, timeline, and budget. Please use a format similar to the one included in **Appendix A**. (**Note:** A strong score in this area will be based on appropriate board involvement in the project.)
2. **Mini-Resumes** - Provide “mini-resumes” that describe the project related expertise of each individual/organization listed on the work plan. No more than one paragraph of relevant information per individual/organization.
3. **Budget** – Provide the following budget information:
  - a. **Project Budget** – Provide a project budget that includes all project related line items for expenditures and all project related line items for funding sources.
  - b. **Explanation of Cost Estimates** – Provide detailed information on the source of the cost estimates and the date the estimates were received.
  - c. **Leverage Verification** – Provide verification of leverage funds including contracts, memorandums of understanding/agreements, award letters, and other documentation that confirms the commitment of other resources for the project. Include documentation and calculations for in-kind contributions and volunteer hours.
4. **Design Projects** – Include a map and pictures of the proposed project area.
5. **Plans/Studies** – Upload any recent economic development plans or studies the organization or locality has completed that includes the downtown area.

**Project Implementation Period: July 1, 2019 – May 31, 2020** (final report due); all disbursements must be completed by May 31, 2020. Quarterly reporting through CAMS is required. All projects must be underway no later than October 1, 2019.

**Appendix A – Work Plan Template**

**Main Street Work Plan**

Committee \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_

Related Board Transformation Strategy/Goal(s):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Project Description: \_\_\_\_\_ Event date or Project Completion date: \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated Results/Measure of Success:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Chair/Person Responsible: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Team Members: \_\_\_\_\_

<i><b>Tasks</b></i>	<i><b>Person Responsible</b></i>	<i><b>Start and End Date</b></i>	<i><b>Cost</b></i>	<i><b>Revenue Generated</b></i>	<i><b>Volunteer Hours Needed</b></i>	<i><b>Staff Hours Needed</b></i>	<i><b>Progress/Completion/Comments</b></i>

TOTAL:                    \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_